

Commentary

Rees Must Now Deliver

Edwin Okong'o

It must feel like the morning of Nov. 3, 2004, or even worse.

After months of noise and silence — depending on what side you took on the issue — it is time to let go and work toward uniting our country.

Pardon me, university.

Perhaps the thing that has suffered the most in this process is the process itself. The relationship between students and the administration has been severely damaged because the administration skipped a major step in the process: dialogue with students. Leaders of various student groups have exchanged harsh words with President Norma Rees, and the result of that is not likely to change overnight.

It is now time to realize that the name is here and start the healing

process. It all has to start with Rees. However, Rees will not succeed in uniting this university if she resorts to the foolhardy ways exhibited during her campaign to change the name.

Yes, she is the president, but she must regard faculty and students as intelligent people capable of making educated decisions. After all, how can we teach students to treat others with respect, if we do not respect them?

Another party Rees has to bring to the table is the city of Hayward. It is my guess that, at this moment, city residents and their leaders feel that the university has added itself to the list of Hayward's incorporated areas.

It will be unrealistic for anyone to think that the university's existence has no effect on the city and vice versa. No matter what Rees has said in the past, the fact remains that the university has a relationship with the city. Many university faculty, students and alumni are also residents of Hayward. Many residents and alumni also donate to the university. The president must reach out to them — whether they live in the hills or the flatlands. She must appreciate their contributions, however small they may be.

Above all, communication between

the president's office and those on the other side of the issue must resume. It is now time for Warren Hall personnel to start returning calls made to their offices for information.

If Rees thinks that getting the CSU board of trustees to approve the name change marks the end of the fight, she is mistaken. The difficult part will be to deliver on all the promises she made during the name change campaign.

Now that the name is not a barrier in raising funds, the wealthy corporations and individuals she claimed would donate must do so immediately. Only then will Rees be able to prove that students and

others opposed to the name change were wrong.

Although students have unwillingly had their university's name taken away, they are reasonable enough to forgive if whatever donations the corporations give are used to improve the college environment.

Let's cross our fingers and hope for better and cleaner classrooms, more flexible class schedules, lower tuition, cleaner toilets, parking meters with higher time limits and a cafeteria that serves food — all courtesy of Cal State East Bay.

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